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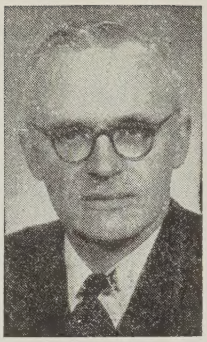

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A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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Editorial Board

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Publisher

William B. Eerdmans, Sr.

AS WE SEE IT 3

THE CHRISTIAN'S POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY 4
Dr. Amry Vanden Bosch, *Professor of Political Science and Director of the School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, the University of Kentucky*

DIVINE ELECTION RE-EXAMINED 9
Dr. James Daane, *Minister, First Christian Reformed Church, Los Angeles, California*

THE AMERICAN TEACHER: PAWN OR PROFESSIONAL? 11
Mr. Lester DeKoster, *Director of the Library, Calvin College*

THE WORD OF GOD AND LEARNING 16
Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Calvin College*

DOES LIFE EXIST ON OTHER PLANETS? 19
Dr. Herman H. Broene, *Associate Professor of Chemistry, Calvin College*

TOWARD A BETTER COMMUNION SERVICE 21
Dr. Lewis B. Smedes, *Associate Professor of Bible, Calvin College*

BOOK NOTES 23

LETTER 23

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In This Issue

Dr. Amry Vanden Bosch writes on one of the most crucial problems of our time: the problem of the state. He points out Biblical views, and discusses the Christian's responsibility. What he has to say on Christian ethics and foreign policy reveals how loudly our times call for the Christian conscience and witness.

Dr. James Daane begins a re-examination of a subject that gravely concerns Reformed theology. That subject is divine election. The silence about it in some circles and the loud proclamation of certain views of it in other circles demand a fresh appraisal of the Biblical truth on the matter.

Mr. Lester DeKoster reviews recent suggestions that the teachers and the national government must assume leadership in American education. Desired and necessary goals, it is maintained, will not be achieved until *teachers* cease to relegate themselves to their present ineffective position, obtain full control over the means of education, and powerfully support their position with a truly professional organization. And national goals will be most nearly insured only when the schools are supported and controlled by the national government.

Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff analyzes a recently published essay on the relation of the Bible to learning written by a disciple of the philosophy expounded by Professors Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven of the Free University of Amsterdam. Mr. Wolterstorff's analysis is very helpful: it clarifies a problem that should interest all who are concerned with Christian education, and it points the thinkers in our midst to the hard work of discovering in what sense the Scriptures direct research on *specific* and *limited topics*.

Dr. Herman Broene takes up the intriguing and timely question, Does life exist on other planets? The question, he asserts, has definite implications for our traditional religious views, and these implications he clearly sets forth.

Dr. Lewis Smedes responds again to Rev. J. K. van Baalen's suggestions for a proper celebration of the Lord's Supper. The discussion, which began in the May *Journal*, has thus far served to make each of us more keenly aware of the Church's practice and malpractice of this holy sacrament.

As We See It

The Issues: 1960

Perhaps the title is misleading, if not presumptuous. Who will determine between which alternatives the American electorate will be choosing on November 8, 1960? Can even the two major parties themselves be adequately defined and distinguished? To questions such as these, four of my Calvin College colleagues and I addressed ourselves for an hour or two, over coffee cups filled and emptying. We offer our conclusions, neither as guide nor as norm, but as factors in the diverse ways we ourselves are going to vote when we exercise with you that inestimable gift of God a few days from now. For such use and interest as our conclusions may have, we present them to you.

Though the two parties cannot be reduced to simple entities, facing each other on clearly defined fronts, we felt at once that those of us who represented the one party were by no means twins of those of us who represented the other. The gulf between our points of view might be difficult to define, but it yawned uncrossable. What lies between us then?

Is It a "Philosophy"?

We began here, and thought of it in terms of socio-economic life. Republicans tend, we thought, to a hands-off policy regarding what we all agreed were genuine social and economic problems — hands-off, that is, so far as the governmental units were concerned. Let government guide, stimulate, encourage, and regulate efforts by individuals and self-developed groups to solve their problems; and only as a last resort let government participate actively — and then at as near the local level as possible — in the construction of housing and schools, the rehabilitation of cities, the development of natural resources, medical care, aid for indigent, for the unemployed, for the aged.

Democrats tend, we agreed, to accept government as a partner in socio-economic life from the beginning, not to the exclusion of individual and local initiative, but as often seeking problems to share in solving as waiting for local efforts to languish. Nor are Democrats, we decided, reluctant to start with the largest unit, the federal government, as agent in solving problems in housing, schools, etc.

In short — if there can be an "in short" in these matters — we thought that Republicans wish to keep the function of government as nearly as possible that of policeman looking on, while Democrats wish to involve it also as participant digging in. Republicans risk not getting the job done; Democrats risk initiative-dulling bureaucracy. Republicans risk refusing to recognize human need; Democrats risk anticipating human needs before they have served their propelling function.

Is this vague? Can one cite actions by both parties which seem to contradict these premises? Indeed. But we think that, by and large, the distinction comes out at all levels, exerts influence on countless legislative decisions, and is fundamentally a deep crevice in that gulf which — on election day — lies between us.

Is It the Candidates?

Who can know a man, and the spirit of a man? Your best friend perhaps arouses only distaste in the heart of another — who may also be your close companion.

Is it what they say? or do? or have done?

Is it what you sense but cannot express?

We thought the two men much alike in certain ways: aggressive, persistent, cool and calculating, able, ambitious, and aware of the now-or-never position each occupied. But from there a listener might have supposed

we were discussing four men and not two. The image the voter has of both candidates may well control the direction his hand takes in the polling booth. It may be so for us, and for you. But the roots these images have are not transplantable. They remain our own, almost like a taste for spinach. Good, bad, indifferent — so it is.

Is It International Relations?

The "outs" always have the argumentative edge here. In 1952 it was Korea, Kommunism, and Korruption. This year it might be Khruschev, Kuba, and Konfusion — though this was a local invention.

Next to, and perhaps superseding in importance, the matter of socio-economic philosophy is the question of how well the ship of state has been maneuvered in the turbulent international waters — and how well either party may be able to chart and keep a course tomorrow and thereafter. The "outs" felt that our prestige had never been lower; the "ins" countered that, if so, this was the natural consequence of bad inheritance in 1952. The list of "losses" could be made impressive, but how do they weigh when "peace" is placed in the other pan of the balance?

That Communism seems to have the initiative among the uncommitted peoples may, first, be myopic analysis or, second, the result of our, and your, not taking democracy seriously enough in these fat and opulent times.

If we are behind in the space race, both candidates seem to agree that 1960 expenditures must be raised.

The issues are complex, the problems vast, and the stake is national survival. The leaders we choose will be obliged to perform the almost impossible: who, do you think, is more able and more likely to gather about him men also more able to do the job?

You have not been asked, we decided, a more crucial question in all your voting history.

Is It Religion?

That religion matters, that it is indeed all-embracing, we understood before we sipped the first of our coffee. Whether religion should be discriminated from political Catholicism; whether Calvinists are pre-committed to one party or to another; whether Quakerism fits or unfits men for executive tasks; whether the candidates, and Americans in general, can be brought to explicit recognition of the religious environment involved in all decision-making: these are matters to which we added our own bit of fuel. Our party lines broke down on the significant rise of Catholicism, and this but displayed to us the unpredictable character of this factor on November 8. We left it there — and to you.

Postscript

Perhaps we did not touch upon some of the issues most important to you: farm policy, civil rights, business and labor, say. But time is, as Longfellow said, fleeting; and this is the ground we covered. With you we will make our way to the polls on November 8, having prayed that the will of God for this great nation He has so richly blessed may be done also through us.

L. D. K.

(With thanks to my friends and colleagues, Professors Ippel, Rienstra, Vander Weele, and Westra.)

The Christian's Political Responsibility

by Amry Vanden Bosch

To ascertain what is the Biblical view of the state and political responsibility is a big order, especially in this day when Christians everywhere are confronted with agonizing questions and problems. The fact that a Roman Catholic is a candidate for the presidency is causing Americans to make a fresh examination of the relation of Church and State, but this problem is a mild one compared to some others which the Christian American faces. What must be his attitude towards his government's policy in placing such heavy reliance for national security upon massive atomic retaliation? What position must the Christian in the West take with respect to the struggle of the peoples of the Communist satellite countries for freedom, especially when it breaks out in open revolt, as it did in East Germany, Poland and Hungary? Must we abandon all effort and hope of liberating them lest we precipitate an all-out nuclear war? What is the duty of the Christians in these satellite countries to their governments? What are they to do in the face of an impossible situation? What should be the attitude of our Christian Negro citizen with respect to methods of forcing respect for his civil rights? At what point, if any, may he embark on organized passive resistance? May he resort to violence to win respect for his rights? And what should be the attitude of the White Christian toward this struggle? Must he make the Negro's struggle his own?

In the *New York Times* a few weeks ago there appeared an unusual letter. It was sent in by an Anglican priest from South Africa. Writing from his own country he appealed to the free world, "and to the United States in particular, to initiate measures to terminate" the tyranny in his country. He stated that "only police action now will establish

internal justice and insure peace in the Continent." He warned us that the "alternatives are frightful: increasingly suicidal rising by the African in the Union coupled with inevitable strife between the Union and its northern neighbors, with all the dangers of world alignment which must follow."

How is the act of this man to be judged? As treason to his people or as the exercise of high Christian responsibility? In any case we may be sure that this minister's letter was written in pain and sorrow.

Biblical Views of the State

The primitive society of early Old Testament history was unified: no distinction was made between the natural and the supernatural or between church and state. They were one. A man's church was his state, his state was his church. This theocratic ideal received a severe jolt when the Jewish people were conquered by foreign rulers. Upon their return from exile their views quite naturally underwent a change, as continued foreign domination made the theocratic ideal untenable except for the Zealots, who wished to overthrow foreign rule and re-establish the Jewish state. It was in this troubled situation that Jesus came to carry on His brief ministry on earth. The Zealots were strongly attracted to Him and at least one or two of His disciples may have been members of this party. Judas may have been a Zealot to the very tragic end. It has been argued that Jesus Himself was a Zealot. Now it is true that He was crucified as a Zealot. The Jewish leaders accused Him of "perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King" (Luke 23:2), but they accused Him of sedition solely for the reason that they could not get the Roman authorities to order His execution on any other grounds.

Jesus must continuously have been confronted with the problem of the state. He could not avoid being caught between the patriotic, revolutionary Zealots, on the one hand, and the collaborators on the other, among whom were numbered the Herodians and many of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Some of the latter on one occasion sought to entrap Him by asking Him the embarrassing question of whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. His reply, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" is among the most widely known sayings of the Master (Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-18; Luke 20:20-26).

This statement of Jesus has a number of implications for our problem, but at this point I wish merely to note that Jesus definitely denounced Zealotism. He was not a Jewish nationalist. By answering the question the way He did, Jesus gave nationalism a severe blow. Indeed, one commentator, an evangelical (Dummelow), interpreting this passage, states that "Christ showed His sympathy with imperialism as opposed to national and racial particularism. Intending Himself to found a universal church, He openly showed His sympathy with the great and beneficent empire which broke down the barriers of national hatred and prejudice, established universal peace, and ensured the diffusion of culture, knowledge and useful arts." We, with our strong feeling for national self-determination and dislike of imperialism, may find this sweeping interpretation a bit shocking, yet we shall have to admit, I think, that it contains a large element of truth. We shall also have to admit that nationalism in modern times, demanding supreme and absolute loyalty, has frequently been a form of idolatry. It has demanded the things that are God's.

I turn now briefly to St. Paul's famous statement in Romans 13. Most of you, I am sure, have found this passage a difficult one. I must confess that in my ardent youth I was jolted by it every time I read it. I rebelled against it. The passage runs as follows: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (a parallel statement is found in I Peter 2.) Does St. Paul mean to suggest that all rulers, even a Nero and a Hitler, are divinely ordained, and that we must give obedience to our rulers, no matter how evil they may be and no matter how they acquired their position of power?

Paul was here dealing with a basic problem which confronts us at all times, namely, that of the necessity for law and order in society. Without government, or order, life would soon become impossible. Sometimes man is confronted with the disagreeable choice of acquiescing in a bad government or inviting chaos. We can live a long time without freedom but we can't live long without order. To overthrow a functioning government is a very serious matter, and may never be lightly undertaken. Apparently some of the Christians at Rome were about ready to resist the Roman authorities, for toward the end of the preceding chapter St. Paul implores them not to avenge themselves, "but leave it to the wrath of God."

In my later years I have puzzled a great deal over the source or basis of political authority. The only satisfactory answer I have been able to find is that of St. Paul.

We should also note that St. Paul did not raise the question of what was to be done when the government makes demands which are in conflict with Christian conscience. We may be sure that his answer in the case would be the same as that of Peter and John when they were charged by the Jewish leaders "not to speak or teach at all in the name

of Jesus." They declared simply, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4: 19-20). He would most emphatically have obeyed God rather than men. That Paul was not a blind worshiper of the state is evident from his reproach that it had "crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:8). If Paul died a martyr's death, as tradition has it, he sealed his absolute loyalty to his Master with his life.

In the last chapter of the Bible we see how governmental power, exceeding its proper role and limits, may become the very embodiment of Satan. Temples were dedicated to the Emperor, who was called "Lord and God," and Christians were cruelly persecuted. No wonder the author of Revelation referred to the imperial government as a blasphemous beast (Rev. 13). Caesar was demanding what was God's. Parenthetically it may be noted that the totalitarian regimes of our day bear a striking resemblance to the picture given in Revelation 13 of the Roman government of that day.

It has been argued that the view of the state revealed in the Apocalypse is in contradiction to St. Paul's views. I do not believe that the two views are at odds. The author of the Apocalypse is not an anarchist. He is not opposed to the state but he is opposed to a government which makes demands it has no right to make, demands which violate the Christian conscience. Paul, and John, if he is the author of Revelation, were opposed both to anarchy and to the absolute state.

Conclusions on What the Bible Teaches About the State

What conclusions can we come to as to the Biblical view of the state and the Christian's political responsibility?

First of all, it is clear that the Bible enjoins obedience to the civil power. The preservation of social order is of the utmost importance, for Christians as well as for others.

Secondly, though civil government plays a very important role in society, the Bible does not accept the state uncritically. Moreover, the state is regarded as having only a provisional character; it is not something final or definitive. It does not rate with the Kingdom of God. The Bible teaches that at the end of the age the kingdoms of this world will become the "kingdom of our Lord and his Christ" (Rev. 12:15). Jesus regarded the state as of secondary importance. The state has its rights and functions as well as the church, but the "things of God" are surely of far greater importance and are of a higher order than the "things of Caesar."

Thirdly, the Bible teaches that the state may become evil and hostile. Jesus warned His disciples, "For my sake you will be dragged before governors and kings to bear witness before them and the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:18). In the last book of the Bible we have a picture of a demonic state.

Fourthly, Jesus taught that the state and church are two. Each has its own sphere: neither must be subjected to the other, nor usurp the other's functions.

In listing these conclusions I am not suggesting that they exhaust the guidance we may gain from the Bible in politics. In addition to the passages which deal specifically with political problems there are the teachings of the Bible as a whole.

The general bases of the Christian political obligation are several. God is the Sovereign of all life, including political life. The second of the two great commandments is that we love our neighbors, which means, I think, that we must co-operate with them, non-Christians as well as Christians, in social and political action, except where our conscience compels us to do it separately as Christians. I like the way it is put by Philip Maury in his *Politics and Evangelism.* "We are members of the Church," he states, "with our whole being. To limit our Christian life to 'religious questions' is to deny that Jesus Christ has redeemed our entire existence. If the Church should avoid political controversies and concentrate only on questions of theology, of spiritual life, or of personal morals, it would display its lack of faith; it would implicitly affirm that God has nothing to do with politics, that politics is outside the bounds of salvation, that the Lordship of Christ is merely spiritual."

Relevance of the Bibical Views of Today

A question which naturally rises is: How relevant are Biblical views in the current situation? Conditions today are radically different from those in New Testament times. In this country and a number of others the governments are democratic. The citizen may help choose the government, may participate in it. He thus bears his share of responsibility for the kind of government he has and the policies it pursues. The individual is no longer merely the object of government policies; he helps determine them. Moreover, contemporary democratic governments, and even non-democratic governments, have adopted welfare programs. Political democracies sooner or later tend to become economic democracies as well. A government with extensive economic activities and a broad social welfare program is something quite different from the earlier governments whose functions were very limited and largely negative. The welfare state strongly attracts the Christian and also presents him with new problems of a subtle nature.

The fact that conditions have changed rather significantly does not mean that the Biblical principles which I have listed are outmoded. First of all, a very large part of the population of the world lives under totalitarian regimes or dictatorships. In some of these countries the Christian conscience is deeply troubled, as is evident from a story which first appeared in a Russian paper and was reprinted

in the *Manchester Guardian* a couple of months ago. A Russian army officer informed a Russian youth who had joined a religious group that he was subject to military service.

"I am a Christian," the youth replied.

"You are a citizen of the Soviet Union."

"No, I am a man of God."

"If you believe in God, that is your own business. But surely you should obey the laws of the Soviet authority."

"I obey God's law."

At this point of the interview the officer decided to quote what he knew of the Scriptures.

"It is written that all authority comes from God. Yes, or no?"

"Yes," the youth replied.

"So, in effect, Soviet authority comes from God," the officer concluded triumphantly.

But the young man was ready with the answer, "He sends these things to try us."

Whether the Russian youth was a Christian pacifist or whether he had religious scruples about rendering military service to a state which is anti-religious we are not told. However that may be, the story reveals the plights in which Christians in some lands find themselves today.

What is the Christian living under a totalitarian regime to do? So long as he is not asked to do anything which violates his Christian conscience, the problem is not acute. But when Caesar asks the things that are God's he is confronted with the hard choice of refusing to obey and almost certainly suffer martyrdom, or actively resist, with all the consequences that that entails. Whether he should resist when there is practically no chance of success is a question which only the individual concerned can answer. It is an agonizing question.

The agony suffered by Christians living under pagan totalitarian regimes is revealed in a letter by an East German pastor to the great Swiss theologian, Professor Karl Barth. The pastor asked Barth what he believed the faithful in East Germany should do, whether they should devote their main efforts to "praying away" the Communist regime, in the same way, he added sardonically, that some churchmen in the Nazi period recommended that people "pray away" Hitler (*N. Y. Times,* 1/19/59).

Barth's answer was surprising, and to most Americans, shocking. He warned that any decision to "pray away" the regime required accepting "before God" the responsibility for such a prayer. "Might you not fear," he wrote, "that He might grant your prayer in the frightful fashion of letting you awake one morning among the fleshpots of Egypt as a man bounden to the American way of life?" He spoke of oppression and persecution as "useful scourges" to purify the church of its complacency and self-assurance. Adversity and suffering are the "tools of God" with which He hammers out salvation. His blows must be endured.

At all times there have been Christians who have held that the Christian life consists in preserving the faith, keeping it free from the corrupting influences of the evil world. The Christian should therefore separate himself from the world and live a life of holiness withdrawn from the world. This attitude is called pietism. Barth's views as expressed in this letter are not those of the pietist, though they seem to bear some resemblance to them. Apparently he sees dangers for the Christian in life in the West. "The message from Christ," he wrote "is repulsive and painful to the West as to the East. Who knows, perhaps it is more painful and repulsive to the West than to the East." Barth seems to base his position on the conviction that the "open totalitarianism" of East Germany is a less insidious evil than the "creeping totalitarianism" which he sees in the West.

Barth's fears of "creeping totalitarianism" in the West may seem to us a strange exaggeration, but his warning should not go unheeded. When the Christian is treated as an enemy of the state, or when the state is grossly evil, the Christian's course is very much harder, but it is simpler. It is much easier to know what is one's duty when the state is openly pagan and hostile to Christianity than when the state is outwardly friendly toward religion and does many good things for its citizens. In the latter case the state and liberal principles may subtly come to be regarded as final and absolute, and we, without being aware of it, may be drawn away from our Christian moorings. Barth is not the only foreign observer who has charged us with giving "the American way of life" a religious and ultimate character. It behooves us always to remember that God is transcendent. We are to have "no other gods" before Him. Only He has a right to our final, total allegiance. We must hold all other commitments "under God," that is to say, under criticism and judgment. The American way of life is not exempt from this judgment.

In this connection it may be appropriate to remark that few American Christians are attracted by world-renunciation, or pietism. The temptation to which we are more likely to succumb is activism, that is, of becoming so engrossed in just doing that we forget to ask ourselves what the significance is of what we are doing, and we fail to ask ourselves whether what we are doing is the most important thing that we could and should be doing. The American church is not immune to this temptation. It has a tendency to make numerous pronouncements on social and political problems. For many Americans social and political programs have become the gospel. Political action, we must remind ourselves, cannot solve the problems of the world,

no matter how effective it may be. Democracy and social welfare cannot be equated with Christianity. Christianity is more than a system of ethics; its task is far greater than the construction of an ideal state on earth.

I hope that I have not given you the impression that I am opposed to church bodies making pronouncements on social and political problems. There are times when the church must speak and may not be silent. When the essence of the gospel is threatened by governmental policy or action, or inaction, or when the state interferes with the freedom of the church to proclaim the Good News, the church cannot do otherwise than to protest officially and to reaffirm the fullness of the gospel. If the state's action is flagrant, the church may even have to call upon its members to disobey the state. But the church may speak only in accordance with the Biblical revelation. To make sure of this there should be general agreement among Christians as to both the content of the proposed statement and the need for its pronouncement. When the church issues frequent pronouncements there is a strong possibility that it may be uttering human wisdom rather than proclaiming God's truth and judgment.

Christian Ethics and Foreign Policy

I now turn to the problem of Christian ethics and foreign policy. It is with respect to world politics that the American finds himself in a most baffling and cruel dilemma. War has long troubled the Christian conscience. The Christian has tried to get out of the difficulty by distinguishing between just and unjust, defensive and offensive wars, but this distinction has not been very helpful, for reasons that are obvious. With the advent of the A- and H-bombs, with their appalling and awesome destructive power, and with intercontinental missiles to carry them to their destination, this problem has become intensely acute for many people. We cannot lightly dismiss their torment, for in addition to the destruction which the explosive power of the bombs would cause, there is the probable after-effect of the lethal radioactive fallout, which might leave large areas uninhabitable for a considerable time. Does resort to war any longer make sense? Can it be morally justified? Probably the only peace that it could bring is the peace of death for large areas of the world.

But let us briefly examine the alternatives that confront us. We now have a peace based on the balance of terror, or on mutual deterrence. But this peace is effective only if we keep up our end of the balance, that is, keep up our retaliatory force strong enough to penetrate any new defenses which the potential enemy may develop. This means that we are tied to a horrible juggernaut. Our offensive power is our chief defensive weapon. We cannot relax for a moment our efforts to maintain our retaliatory power at the highest possible level.

Secondly, we must be firmly prepared to use this annihilating power in retaliation against a first nuclear attack by the enemy, for unless the enemy is convinced that we would use it, it would cease to deter him. Any signs of wavering on our part might tempt the enemy to make a first, knockout attack. This, in short, is our dilemma; we have come to rely for our national security on our determination to use power which, if used, would destroy many large cities and millions of people.

Thirdly, would we use this annihilating power merely in retaliation for a first-strike in an all-out nuclear war, or would we also use it if Russia marches its troops into West Germany or Turkey? Would we be justified in using massive retaliation in these cases — justified in our own eyes, in the eyes of the world? But this is the only defense we have; we are not now prepared to fight local or limited wars. The Russians do, and can, piecemeal, by limited wars conquer one country after another. Here our huge nuclear retaliatory power is, and would be, of no avail. To build up our armed forces to the point where they can effectively engage in limited wars may require $25 billion more in annual expenditures for armaments.

Fourthly, if in the face of all of these difficulties — moral, political, and physical — we adopt the answer of Christian pacifism, as many now advocate, we must be prepared to see the whole world dominated by Communism. Are we prepared to take that responsibility?

Fifthly, assuming that we could make a deal with Russia whereby we accept the status quo in Europe, it would leave Poland, East Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria in the Communist orbit. May we for our own peace, and the world's peace, abandon the satellite peoples to permanent Communist domination? Shall we kill all hope for liberation in the hearts of these people?

"Blessed are the peace makers," said Jesus, but you will remember that just before He uttered this beautitude, He said "Blessed are the pure in heart." How pure in heart would we be if we abandoned these people to Communist rule in order to secure our own peace? Must we sacrifice purity for peace, or peace for purity? A cruel dilemma indeed.

Reinhold Niebuhr has summed up our difficulties in this matter by saying that half of us want to be pure and the other half responsible. He has said further that "if the democratic nations fail, their failure must be partly attributed to the faulty strategy of idealists who have too many illusions when they face realists who have too little conscience."

In conclusion we must recognize that the Bible gives us basic principles, not kitchen recipes for human conduct. The Christian daily confronts problems and situations to which there are no easy answers or solutions. The Bible is full of unan-

swered questions. Sometimes we are confronted with a choice between effectiveness and purity, when it is evident that we cannot have both, and whichever way we choose we shall need God's forgiveness. But men must act. The Bible recognizes both the heights and depths of human nature. Love reveals the heights, sin or egotism the depths. The pervasive results of egotism and pride are seen throughout man's social and historical life.

I close with a quotation from Hutchinson's book, *The Two Cities*: "Since man's confidence or faith is in God, he is able to look with a clear and realistic eye at the pushing and pulling of group egotism which forms so large a part of the life of men and nations. Here indeed is a viewpoint from which we may look without sentimentality and without cynicism at the creativity and the conflict of man's life in history and society."

Divine Election Re-examined

by James Daane

I HAVE NO STATISTICS to support the claim but I do have the aging impression that election receives rather scant attention in Christian Reformed pulpits, and that when it does make a pulpit appearance, it is often handled gingerly. I have another long-standing impression. This one, too, is not based on a theological poll, unless it be the polling of my own mind. The doctrine of election has received what might be called the silent treatment because much theological reflection and debate has thrown this cardinal doctrine far out of Biblical focus. It is seen in an unbiblical perspective; it is seen more as a menace to than as a source of Christian comfort, something to be argued and debated rather than preached. The ponderous infra-supralapsarian debate of yesteryear is followed today by a measure of interest in divine election that is in inverse ratio to its importance.

I do not know whether Professor G. C. Berkouwer, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, shares these impressions. But he has certainly written a book on election which could, I judge, change the state of American evangelical theology for the better, insofar as its message penetrated the mind of the Church.[1] In what I would appraise as one of his two most significant books, Professor Berkouwer brilliantly exposes the misunderstandings and distortions that have befallen the truth of election in the Reformed community. He tellingly and incisively exposes the theological myths that divine sovereignty is but a principle of monistic causality, and election and reprobation but two sides of the coin of a hard, metalic, deterministic and arbitrary sovereignty. In this first of a series of articles, my intention is to point the reader to the central thrust of the book.

BERKOUWER BEGINS his discussion of election by indicating the boundaries within which election can be rightly understood. It is here that Berkouwer says the most important thing he has to say. The remainder of his book could be characterized as an exposure of off-limit distortions of election constructed by those who failed to do their thinking about election within the Biblical boundaries.

It is not enough merely to acknowledge that the Bible constitutes the limits within which our thinking about election must take place. We must also make sure that we think about election in the manner in which the Bible thinks about election. We must see this truth *within the Biblical perspective.* The very structure of our doctrine of election must be derived from the Bible; any structure created by us transgresses the Biblical limits and thereby loses the Biblical perspective.

The true Biblical perspective is not, if I understand Berkouwer's deepest motif correctly (and I think I do), something that can be reduced to a proposition from which we may then draw inferences and make logical deductions. Such inferences and deductions would be of our own making and would indicate that we have gone beyond the Biblical boundaries.

The Biblical limits within which alone we can gain a true knowledge of election are indicated by the fact that in Biblical thought election is always *related to faith.* Election and faith are correlatives; they are interrelated. They indeed are not interrelated in such a manner that faith is in any sense the *cause* of election. Berkouwer would roundly reject the idea of Professor Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary that faith is a secondary cause of man's salvation. Berkouwer's idea of the correlation of election and faith is something quite different.

They are related, says Berkouwer, in such fashion that nothing can be known about election which is not at the same time the knowledge of faith; nothing can be said about election which is not also a confession of faith. Election can be known and

1. G. C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1960).

understood only within the context of the cry and joy of the Christian faith, within the experience of the forgiveness of sins. The boundaries of our knowledge of election coincide, in Biblical thought, with the boundaries of faith. Whatever is said or thought about election outside the knowledge and confession of faith — by way of drawing inferences and logical deductions, for example — is done beyond the Biblical limits; election is then no longer seen in the Biblical perspective. Election is the object of faith's knowledge, of faith's trust, and thus a truth that leads us to worship and doxology.

Berkouwer quite rightly points out that in Biblical thought a proper knowledge and contemplation of election culminates in a doxology of joyful praise to God. Paul, for example, concludes his profound discussion of God's election of Israel and of the Gentiles with a doxology of praise. Any notion that we may entertain about election which does not contain within it the impulse of joy and worship, the impulse to break forth into doxology, is thereby shown to be an erroneous, unbiblical notion of election. Either our acknowledgment of the truth of election is an expression of our faith, or it is a mere caricature of election and a menace to faith. The true knowledge of election does not unseat and unsettle, but rather expresses the very confidence and assurance which is of the essence of faith.

BERKOUWER is very much aware that the truth of election has in the Reformed community often suffered distortion by off-limit versions which lost the Biblical perspective. Thus election for many Reformed Christians is regarded more as a menace and threat than a source of comfort and joy. It is a matter of history that many Reformed Christians, both in America and in the Netherlands, have been more troubled than comforted, more filled with anxiety than praise, by the doctrine of election. Berkouwer knows, as does many a Reformed pastor, that it is quite impossible to get behind and to obtain a purchase on the troubled soul who admits the truth of the gospel but continually doubts and questions whether the gospel is true "for me." He knows, too, that such anxious souls can only come to regain their confidence of faith and their assurance of the divine love if they can be led to see the necessity of returning and of again taking their stand within the Biblical boundaries. There alone they can recapture the vision of the truth of election within the Biblical perspective. They must be brought to see that "the way of the confession of the election of God is the way of faith," and that "wherever the doctrine of election is detached from these connections of faith, it becomes a foreign element in the preaching of the gospel, it loses its consoling character and becomes nothing but a source of unrest" (p. 26).

SUCH A RETURN to the Biblical boundaries and a recapture of the truth of election in its Biblical focus will not be easily accomplished. Berkouwer's book will be very effective in accomplishing such a return if it is made required reading in Calvin Seminary, as well as in other Reformed seminaries, and if it is seriously studied by Reformed ministers who believe the truth of election very much, but preach it considerably less. Readers will come to see that off-limit versions of election not only rob the Christian of the confidence of faith and abandon him to the terrors of anxiety, but turn the doctrine of election into something that can be debated but not preached.

Such a return — and I think it is badly needed — will be especially difficult for the unlearned church member who may have long been exposed to a picture of election which is out of Biblical focus. The best place for him to begin is not with this book, which is written for the more or less theologically trained mind, but with the simple recognition that the primitive churches of the New Testament had no such problem. Paul had much to say about election. His churches presented him with a host of practical religious questions and problems, yet election was not one of them. What has plagued so many Reformed Christians with anxiety and religious uncertainty seems never to have troubled the membership of Paul's New Testament churches. Indeed, there is nothing in the entire Bible which suggests that either the Old Testament or the New Testament child of God ever regarded the truth of election as a kind of haunting menace that threatened to make the comfort of their faith and their eternal salvation problematical. The fact that election is a source of religious anxiety is quite distinctively a Reformed problem and that it appears never to have troubled the people of the Bible suggests a method of return for those who have been troubled by the reflections and disputations of the theologians. It also suggests rather broadly that at some times and places many of them have gone awry by leaving the Biblical boundaries and losing the Biblical perspective in which alone the truth of election can be known and rightly understood.

Faith and election are not identical. They may quite properly be distinguished in Christian reflection. But they may not be separated in such a manner as to suggest that the knowledge of faith is one thing and the knowledge of one's personal election quite another thing. For in Biblical thought election neither exists nor can be known apart from faith. Just as Christ does not exist and cannot be known apart from his Body the Church, just so there is no election and no knowledge of it apart from faith. Election is the object of that knowledge and that trust which is faith. What God hath joined together. . . .

The American Teacher: *Pawn or Professional?*

by Lester DeKoster

A review of The Future of Public Education *by Myron Lieberman**

NOT YET ANOTHER book on American schools! Have not the experts and the quacks diagnosed enough? prescribed enough? unsesttled enough?

So they have. More than enough. The hapless classroom teacher who took half-seriously even a fraction of the advice he receives would be paralyzed into immobility, so contradictory it all becomes. The experts who statisticize, and the quacks who energize a chaotic public distrust, have together enshrouded American public schools in a mist of rancorous controversy. But here is a man who is *not*, he says "an advocate of basic education, progressive education, liberal education, the three R's, social adjustment, or stricter discipline in the schools."

The very disavowals are provocative. Having read them on the flyleaf, one turns with caution to see if the promise is fulfilled within the book.

It is. In fact, the blast of fresh air which Mr. Lieberman turns upon a discussion long grown stale of school problems hidden in misty imprecision tempts one to draw such great lungfuls that he may become more enthusiastic upon first reading than the author's ideas prove, on more judicious perusal, to merit.

The author, who is director of basic research for the Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland, writes with gusto. He enjoys it. He brandishes superlatives and waves absolutes. "There is no easier way," he writes on page 139, "to achieve a reputation as a crusading intellectual than to lead a 'Down with football' movement on the campus." In like manner, the unkind critic might suspect, Mr. Lieberman seeks an easy route to national reputation by recklessly berating in his own way nationally accepted practices and institutions.

If this "tit for tat" is all that Mr. Lieberman receives, however, he gets less than his due. Unlike most iconoclasts, he has a program for replacing the idols he topples over, replacing them with vital, living forces he carefully defines.

One need not agree with his proposals to enjoy his advocacy of them and to profit from his book. Agreement is not likely to be unanimous. But educators have here the opportunity to lift their discussions out of the cross-fire between vocationalists and intellectualists, to leave behind them the labeling and the libeling which have become the chief staple of pedagogical controversy. If this book promotes this, it will have done more than enough.

The Thesis

The thrust of Mr. Lieberman's book is, I think, briefly summed up in this: American education has not achieved the highest goals of which it is capable, and which are necessary to national survival. The cure of whatever are the causes contributing to this shortcoming must be found by the teachers themselves, under the leadership of a "professional" organization developed along the lines of those now sustained by doctors, lawyers, and other occupational groups. Commensurate with this development of a strong national teachers' association must be the shift to the federal government of support and control of the nation's public schools. For leadership in this dual program we turn, not to the liberal arts college faculties, but to Foundational financial support of a dynamic, imaginative teacher-led program to professionalize teaching and federalize the schools.

This is, clearly, a book of strategy and tactics. The goals for American education are set by the American people, and Mr. Lieberman believes the people are rather well agreed on what these goals should be. It is to the most effective methods of achieving such goals that this book is directed. What follows is an attempt to delineate its main themes.

Goals and Means

American education is much less effective, Mr. Lieberman begins, than the American people, especially the teachers, assume it to be. The most important causes for this futility are rooted in the old-fashioned power structure which determines the place of teachers in the socio-economic pattern of the nation. This position will not be changed by the "great debate" between "progressives" and "conservatives," a debate which has been and is largely irrelevant to the real issues in American education.

The people are, Mr. Lieberman believes, in general agreement on the purposes for which they support their huge educational enterprise. These purposes are, in his words, "the development of critical thinking, effective communication, creative skills,

* Published by University of Chicago Press, 1960; 294 pages, $5.00.

and social, civic, and occupational competence" (p. 17). It is the prerogative of a free people to set such goals, in pursuit of which they create and sustain a public-school system. The primary cause, however, for educational ineffectiveness arises precisely out of the popular failure to discriminate this right to set goals from the quite separate right of selecting the *means* to achieve these goals. The choice of *means*, that is of instructional tools, methods, and subject matters calculated to attain the ends which the public sets for its schools, is a choice which should be "professionally" made — if only teachers were genuinely "professional."

To sum up: the ends of education are, properly, socially determined; and the American people are generally agreed as to what these ends should be. The *means* employed in the schools to achieve these ends should be selected entirely by the educator; and to this the American people are by no means sensitive. Nor will they be so until teachers themselves have a "professional" organization capable of giving pedagogical leadership, of setting its own house in order, and of resisting all efforts to dominate the classroom from the "outside."

Whose School System?

The school system is the nation's school system. In contradiction with this fact is the shibboleth of local control.

Our nation is one. Its broad goals are the same. But the school system established to achieve these goals is fractured, splintered, divided by a system of "local control" which is, says Mr. Lieberman, "intellectually a corpse."

Local control accounts in large measure for the "dull parochialism and attenuated totalitarianism that characterize public education in action." That is, local control causes chaos in curricula, to the great loss of the millions of children who move from place to place every decade; and it means in practice the genuflection of the schools before sundry pressure groups, each formed for the "good" of the community in theory, and each pursuing power for itself in fact; pressure groups which, says Mr. Lieberman, could not touch the schools under federal protection.

If the public wishes the schools to train "critical thinking" then the public must permit the teacher to criticize, and to teach the pupils to criticize. Says our author, "An education in which the search for truth is carried on regardless of what empires topple, interests collapse, or heads roll is the only real education there can be." But this kind of education is by no means insured by collecting and spending money for schools on the local level. All the evidence points rather to the contrary.

The bogey of "federal coercion" cannot hold a candle, in practice, to local tyrannies in pressuring the schools. The federal system is far too massive, Mr. Lieberman believes, to be bent by local or even national extremists. Unless we all fall prey to totalitarianism, against which local control of the schools would also be helpless, there is no real threat of "federal dictatorship" in education. The teacher's freedom to look every man in the eye, and to teach what is required to meet the national goals most effectively, will be most nearly insured only when the national school system is nationally administered. And, incidentally, only then will the nation achieve equal educational opportunities for *all* its children.

Who Sets the Curriculum?

The determination of school curriculum by local school boards cannot, writes Mr. Lieberman, "stand the test of rational analysis." And it is at this point that most of the current "save the schools" campaigns only serve to complicate educational confusion by goading school boards to make "professional" decisions.

"Virtually all of the 'what's wrong with public education' books end with a clarion call," says the author, "for citizens to attend PTA and school board meetings to achieve this, that, or the other reform. Such appeals have a certain plausibility; in the mind's eye, we can see an aroused citizenry marching on the school board to safeguard the education of children. In reality, the citizen-watchdogs often turn out to be PTA mothers, professional Legionnaires, people who want the school bus to stop closer to (or farther from) their homes, young men on the make politically, and other groups and individuals with assorted axes to grind. Most have a sincere interest in the welfare of public education, but this interest gets so intermixed with their private interests and their hobby horses that the net result of their participation is not especially beneficial" (pp. 60-61).

It is the self-motivated custodians of public education who tend to take a faint view of criticism of their efforts, particularly if that criticism occurs in the classroom. Critical evaluation of community habits in general is unappreciated in the community, if that evaluation is made by the schools. "In the abstract," writes Mr. Lieberman, "practically everyone agrees that our schools should teach students to think critically in important areas of concern — politics, economics, international affairs, and so on. What subject matters and what teaching methods will develop such critical thinking? You cannot develop critical thinking if the students and teachers cannot criticize anything. Teachers who are serious about developing critical thinking must have the freedom to be critical of points of view learned at home, in the community, at church, and so on. . . . However, as things stand, teachers do not have the power to act on this principle.

"In the long run, we must see to it that non-professional determination of the curriculum is as unthinkable as non-professional determination of the techniques of brain surgery. In the short run, the solution is to resist non-professional interference in every way possible while working toward a system in which such interference would be impossible" (pp. 64-65).

Mr. Lieberman enforces his comparison between the professional status of the physician and that of the teacher: "When the private patient says to his physician: 'Restore me to health, but I shall tell you what drugs to use and the dosage,' the physician is ethically obligated to withdraw. The reason is that the physician cannot take responsibility for the health of his patient under such circumstances. The same reason would apply in the case of the publicly employed physician — he would be obligated to withdraw from employment wherein he had to submit to lay interference in professional matters" (p. 69). And, as the author goes on to suggest, if the teacher will give his own "professional" association the same status and authority that the physician has given his, the teacher's withdrawal from an untenable school situation will have powerful and organized support and may lead to corrective consequences. The load the teacher now bears when school boards and pressure groups invade what should be his professional domain is one of his own choosing; he can slough it off whenever he cares to make his "profession" genuinely *professional.*

But what, then, of the national "professional" associations the teachers have already created?

Is There a Teaching "Profession"?

Mr. Lieberman answers with a hearty "No." In the first place the word is a misnomer. There is no teaching "profession," judging by all the standards that govern the meaning of that term.

A *professional* group controls admission to its own ranks. Teachers do not! A *professional* group exerts great influence on the curricula of the schools which prepare graduates for their profession. Teachers do not! A *professional* group defines the certification requirements established by law for the practice of their profession. Teachers do not! In short, the teachers have no real "professional organizations," and are not, so far forth, members of a profession.

Who should establish teacher-training curricula, set standards for certification and admission to the teaching profession? The job is now done by state boards of education. It should be done by the teachers themselves through their own professional association. Not until this prevails will teachers be members of a profession in any meaningful sense.

In keeping with his purposes, the author does not pause long to discuss the probable content of "professionalized" teacher-education curricula. He prescribes, however, deliberate infusion of theory with daily realism in laboratory-school classrooms.

For those tempted to turn at this juncture to the "liberal arts" as a way out of the teacher's ineffectual state, the author has a tasty chapter entitled:

"Why Liberal Education Does not Liberalize"

This chapter is in a way a refreshing rejoinder to the olympian attacks on public education made in the last decade in the name of the liberal arts, attacks phrased in the pattern of "The Diminished Mind," or "Schools Without Scholars," or "Why Johnny Can't Read," and similar "constructive" denunciations of the life-work of dedicated people.

Mr. Lieberman defines "the idea of liberal education" as one "that extends the horizons, that relates to basic ideas and problems, that develops the ability to think, that heightens sensitivity and perception in areas of deep human concern" (p. 126).

Careful studies show, Mr. Lieberman points out, that in fact too many of the "liberal arts colleges" achieve little of these ends. The impact of these colleges on "the values and intellectual habits of their students is negligible."

Nor is the cause of this failure to be laid to poor habits engendered in high school. The craze for football and athleticism generally as a substitute for scholarship did not originate in the high school and creep up into the colleges. On the contrary, it originated in the liberal arts colleges and drifted down, as did most of the other "frills and fads" so volubly denounced from gray college heights since World War II. And these substitutes for learning grow, and have grown, on the college campuses not as competitors to "education" but as compensations for its absence. "On most campuses, non-academic activities do not replace the intellectual life; they flourish because there was no such thing as intellectual life on these campuses in the first place."

There are, happily, exceptions to this general indictment of the colleges among both public and private institutions, but, the author says, "my conviction is that every major weakness of public education has its roots in higher education, and especially in the liberal arts colleges. For example, overemphasis upon athletics, social graces, and 'adjustment,' the favorite whipping boys of our contemporary custodians of culture, are strictly hand-me-downs from the liberal arts colleges" (p. 136) and, "Granting all the difficulties in making an estimate, I would say that about 80 per cent of the academic work of classroom teachers has been in the liberal arts. . . . [and therefore] the effectiveness of public education will be closely related to the effectiveness of the liberal arts colleges" (p. 128).

The inquiring mind, presumed to be a product of liberal education, is assured of its convictions by having subjected them to criticism. But how can the colleges aspire to the development of such minds when the faculties themselves are obliged, in favor of the annual budget, to accept restrictions upon their inquiries and expressions of opinion? Mr. Lieberman quotes in this regard with (rare) approval from Dr. Robert Hutchins' *The University of Utopia*: "I believe that the educators of America are largely responsible for the present confusion in and about education. They have felt obligated in my day to seek for money, first, last, and all the time. They have always supposed, I think erroneously, that money could be obtained only for activities that harmonized with the interests and opinions of those who had it" (pp. 83-84; Lieberman, p. 141).

That those who pay the piper are not, as Dr. Hutchins suggests, always insistent upon calling the tune suggests that when the liberal arts faculties take interest and action in developing a climate of opinion in which this "hands off" attitude spreads, freedom of speech on the college campus will spread with it. "The fact is," says Mr. Lieberman, "that all types of educational institutions have found it necessary to make unprofessional accommodations to their sources of funds."

The answer to this fact for the colleges lies in the liberal arts faculties taking seriously their relative position in the socio-economic structure of society, and moving to strengthen it. But, alas, to this practical problem, so fraught with significance for free inquiry and free speech, the liberal arts professor refuses serious attention. It is not at one remove from his field of interest, it is two steps away. He pours scorn upon even the serious study of his *own* activity: courses in theory and practice of teaching. How, then, expect him to treat realistically his place in the national socio-economic power structure when he cannot even be interested in considering the methods and techniques of *his own* occupation? Mr. Lieberman is explicit: "In our liberal arts colleges, the professors continue to croak 'vocationalism' at the idea of education courses even for teachers, and to act as if a course is liberalizing only to the extent that it has nothing directly to do with man's work or his immediate problems. . . . Instead of regarding liberal education as an ideal and then evaluating courses according to their capacity to contribute to this ideal, professors have come to regard liberal education as something that can occur only in courses which are under the jurisdiction of the liberal arts college. There is no basis in theory or fact for this identification; it is purely gratuitous" (pp. 146-47).

Meanwhile most of the liberal arts colleges float along on the day-to-day stream of the nation's political, social, and economic activity, often futile, helpless, and indifferent, while "intelligent people in all walks of life are finding it increasingly difficult to take seriously the claim that professors in the humanities know more than anyone else about the purposes and values of existence" (p. 150). The end of the decline of "liberal education" says Mr. Lieberman, despite the noises of a revival spurred by Sputnik, is not yet. Nor will it be until the liberal arts professors stop expecting someone else to do their fighting for them while they keep school in misty oblivion of their times.

What, Then?

Nothing, then or now, until teachers cease being "an extremely backward group" in the area of employer-employee relations. Having benightedly rejected unionization and collective bargaining as "unprofessional," the teachers have deliberately relegated themselves to the ineffective position they now occupy in American life. Unlike their professional kindred who wisely substituted only the name "Association" for the name "Union," the teachers have delivered themselves free of charge into inconsequence.

How ineffective in fact is the teachers' largest "professional" organization, The National Education Association, can be estimated by considering seriously that "the public cares less about the competence of teachers than it does about the competence of any other professional group."

And why is this so? Because, unlike other stronger and therefore more effective associations, the N.E.A. "does not believe" in exercising control over standards for teachers or for *teaching,* nor has it ever taken any consequential steps to "advance the interests of teachers." The American Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, is neither strong enough nor imaginative enough to fill the vacuum left by N.E.A. Nor, in Mr. Lieberman's judgment, is the American Association of University Professors any more effective on the college and university level, "particularly in its shocking incapacity to protect the integrity of higher education" in recent attacks on "liberal" professors.

The smaller "professional" groups are in no better way. Mr. Lieberman instances the American Historical Association: "Now whatever the A.H.A. may be, by no stretch of the imagination can it be regarded as a professional organization. According to the Association publication, 'The A.H.A. welcomes to its membership anyone who subscribes to its purposes' — and pays $7.50 in dues. The Association sets no standards for admission to teaching history or being a 'historian.' It neither formulates nor enforces a code of professional ethics. It is at most an organization of people interested in history; it is no more 'professional' than a society

of stamp collectors. The very fact that history professors pompously refer to the A.H.A. as their 'professional' organization tells us a great deal about the organizational naïvété of these academicians" (p. 210).

And this is typical of "professional" teachers' associations; and illustrates why they serve largely only as excuses for professors' annual jaunts about the country to attend conventions from which no "professional" action ensues, nor is any expected.

Toward a Solution

Unlike many diatribes on the subject of education, Mr. Lieberman's book has a concrete program for "revolution."

His last chapter is entitled, bewitchingly enough, "Beyond the Cliché Barrier." It is a detailed outline of an action program, based on the suggestions already made and those further discussed in the last section of the book, to which our review has now come.

Mr. Lieberman establishes two general principles: (1) Teachers must prevent the public from extending its legitimate right to establish the goals for education over into the field of determining what means shall be employed to achieve these goals. (2) Leadership in developing an educational "profession" qualified to uphold the intent of the first principle must come from within the teaching group itself.

In discussion of the second objective (the first having been the theme of much already considered) Mr. Lieberman observes that Dr. James B. Conant addressed his famous "Report" on American secondary education to *school board* members instead of to school *administrators*. Many of Dr. Conant's twenty-one recommendations are clearly "professional" by implication; yet they are made to non-professionals. Why? Obviously because school *administrators* lack genuine "professional" status. What Dr. Conant's address to school boards indicates in bold relief is that no outside force is going to give professional status to administrators, or to teachers at all levels, until they win it for themselves.

The American Federation of Teachers must merge with the National Education Association. Let this joint body seek Foundation grants to support an executive group capable of welding teachers and teacher groups into one strong, competent, national unit. A unit, then, becoming capable of setting effective *standards* for teacher training, for their admission to professional status, for their continuation in professional status, and for their protection in the legitimate performance of their professional tasks. The ultimate beneficiary of such a program, Mr. Lieberman points out, would be not only, nor even primarily, the teacher himself; it would be the nation which a revivified educational system would serve.

What the American teacher needs in 1960, concludes Mr. Lieberman, is what the Abraham Flexner report on U.S. medical education — done also under Foundation auspices, those of the Carnegie Corporation — did for the then disorganized medical "profession" in 1910. Flexner found the doctors in much the chaotic state occupied by teachers today. His fearless report opened the door to the effective control of medical standards in school, and in practice, now enjoyed by that profession, a control which has contributed immeasurably to the social and economic status the doctors enjoy. Where is the Abraham Flexner for the teacher of 1960? Until he is found, all diatribes against, and all defences of, American education will be exercises in learned — or not so learned — futility. What he has to do, step by step, Mr. Lieberman outlines with great care and precision in his last chapter. No summary of the program would do it justice.

Postscript

Whether or not Mr. Lieberman hopes that this book may become another Flexner "Report," or may be developed under Foundation auspices into one, is a matter of conjecture. At least the author merits careful attention, first by teachers and also by American citizens everywhere. There is, of course, a dark side to the centralization Mr. Lieberman aspires to promote. But it will be one of the tasks of the decade ahead *to obtain* on the one hand the values inherent in federalized centralization, not only of the nation's schools, *without succumbing* to the threats it poses. The luxury of inherited divisions which have long outlived their usefulness, the futility of a pretended "professionalism" which has come to obscure ineptitude, the threat of aggressive competitive systems on the march around the world: all of these urgently call for some "revolution" in American education. If it is not to be according to Mr. Lieberman's blueprint, what have *we* to propose?

The Word of God and Learning

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

"How is our Christian faith related to learning?" "How are the Scriptures, the Word of God, related to scholarship?" To the intellectual and scholarly Christian these are matters of ultimate concern, as indeed they have always been. For though centuries of discussion on this issue have produced a great deal of intense feeling, even of ill will, they have not produced any comparable amount of clarity in the solutions to the problem — let alone unanimity. So any kind of fresh approach which offers clarity where before there was obscurity, solutions where before there were problems, is to be welcomed. Only by patiently striving toward clarity can we hope to arrive — in love and kindness — at the truth on this matter; uttering old formulae with intensity, or propounding confusion and obscurity with a profound air, will evoke emotions but not answers.

In a recent set of lectures my colleague in the Philosophy Department at Calvin College, Dr. H. Evan Runner, addresses himself to precisely these questions.[1] He says, "To most of us, at least at first glance, the principles of mathematics and logic, for example, would very much seem to remain the same, whether Scripture is brought into the picture or not. The statement 2 x 2 = 4 is true for everybody, isn't it? And thermodynamics would seem to remain thermodynamics; and agronomy, agronomy. What in the wide world, then, might the relation of Scripture to these and other areas of learning be?" (p. 89). In what follows I should like to consider Dr. Runner's answer to this question.

Dr. Runner begins by saying that the connection is not merely "extrinsic," by which he means that the connection is not merely that of a Christian *man* teaching biology, chemistry, etc. He says this as if he expected some people to disagree with him; but I think all of us would agree that this is not the only connection between Christianity and learning. Rather, we all hold that there is some sort of connection between the Word of God and various subject matters themselves, the only question being: *What* sort of connection? We all agree, in short, that there is here what Dr. Runner calls an "intrinsic" connection. But we want to know what kind of connection this is.

Dr. Runner, though, gives an argument designed to show that Christians must accept an intrinsic connection between the Word of God and learning: "That brings us back to our question, whether there is an *intrinsic* connection between the Word of God and the world of learning. Can we sincerely speak of *Scriptural* principles here? Is Scripture also in this area of our life a lamp to our feet and a light to our path? If we cannot honestly answer these questions in the affirmative then we are left with merely Christian *people* who work at *a science*. A science, presumably, that has principles of its own, which secrets it yields up to those who go to work on it. An *autonomous science* . . . , as we are accustomed to speak of it. But if *that* is the true state of affairs it *does indeed involve a different conception of the Word of God and of the Christian religion.* For there is then one area, at least, in our human life for which the Word of God gives no light, and indeed which itself *requires* no such light inasmuch as it would seem to have a *light of its own* (its own principle), *at which we can get unaided* . . . . Then the Christian religion would have a limited validity . . ." (p. 90).

Now in the first place, Dr. Runner remarks that if we are to understand the nature of this intrinsic connection between the Word of God and learning, we had better come to some agreement on what is the Word of God. Here he is concerned to make two points. First, he holds that the Word of God is a *unity*. It is not completely clear to me what he means by this; but I think he means that the Word of God has some one central message or theme, that all its various parts can be understood as ramifications of this central theme, and that to try to understand them in any other way would be to misunderstand them. Secondly, he holds that the Word of God is a *power* that comes to us and not something to which we come with our understanding. Again, it is not completely clear what he means by this. In places it sounds as if, like many contemporary theological writers influenced by existentialism, he is playing down the role of the Bible in the Christian life, and holding that Christian faith does not include belief in any propositions. This of course makes Christianity completely subjective; and I feel sure that Dr. Runner does not intend this. For in fact he constantly quotes the Bible; and in various passages throughout the lectures he uses the terms "Word of God," "Scriptures," and "Bible" interchangeably. So I think we must conclude that, without saying so, he is making something like the classic Reformed distinction between the Scriptures and the testimony of the Spirit to the Scriptures. Only for both of these he uses the expression "Word of God."

Now if someone contends that there is one cen-

1. "The Relation of the Bible to Learning" in *Christian Perspectives* 1960 (Pella, Iowa: Pella Publishing Co.).

tral theme in the Word of God, it is incumbent on him to try to say what this theme is; and this Dr. Runner does. If I understand him, he holds that this central theme has these three aspects: (1) God has laid down laws for His creation but is not Himself bound by these laws; (2) the human self is a "radical, integral unity," a *religious* unity; (3) the human self is by its nature and inevitably subject to the laws which God has laid down. At this point someone might wonder why these are not *three* themes, rather than one theme with three aspects. To this Dr. Runner replies that these three aspects are not independent, for no one of them can be understood without understanding the others. Now I think one might very profitably discuss whether this is a good summary of the essence of God's Word. I am myself bothered, among other things, by the extreme ambiguity in Dr. Runner's use of the word "law," and the vagueness in his use of the word "unity." But let us overlook this in order to get back to our main topic and henceforth in our discussion view the Word of God in this light.

HERE I THINK it is important to be concrete; too many discussions of this topic suffer from excess of generality. So let us pick a particular law from a particular science, and deal with it. Any law will do as well as any other, but let us pick one from logic. One of the laws of logic is this: From a statement of the form "All dogs are animals" one cannot validly infer a statement of the form "All animals are dogs." To make such a move would be to commit what is known, in the jargon of logicians, as the *fallacy of illicit conversion.* If I am not mistaken it was the pagan Greek philosopher Aristotle who first formulated this law; and I am not aware that anyone has ever disputed it.

Let us take it for granted, provided this law is indeed true, that it is one of the laws laid down by God in His creation. Then how is knowing the law of illicit conversion related to knowing that God has laid it down, or more broadly, related to knowing God's Word? The most intimate possible connection would be this: No one could know the law of illicit conversion without knowing God's Word. And to know the law of illicit conversion one need only know God's Word in all its implications. These two sentences do not say the same thing. To put them more generally, the first says that the pagan can have no knowledge since he does not know God's Word. The second says that in knowing God's Word we have all knowledge. Let me treat these then in order.

In many passages Dr. Runner seems to say that the pagan necessarily lacks all knowledge. He says, for example, "I mean by Law every word of God by which He has subjected the creation to His Will or Rule. Law is thus nothing other than the Will of the sovereign God for His creation. But for that very reason it is not possible to have a true knowledge of the Law apart from a true knowledge of God as sovereign Creator" (pp. 100-101). In this passage Dr. Runner says that Law is *every* Word of God; but then, of course, no one can know God's Law, since no one knows *every* Word of God. However, Dr. Runner says that Christians *do* know God's Law. So one naturally concludes that what he really wishes to say is this: It is impossible to have a true knowledge of *any* law apart from a true knowledge of God as sovereign Creator. Then it follows, since he did not have this knowledge, that Aristotle did not truly know the law of illicit conversion. And this is a truly astonishing thesis: Aristotle never really knew the law of illicit conversion, though it was he who first formulated it. What arguments does Dr. Runner give in order to persuade us of this very surprising view?

In the passage just quoted he appears to give this reason: Aristotle did not know the law of illicit conversion, because laws are nothing other than the Will of the sovereign God, and Aristotle did not know this. Now when put thus, this argument seems to me certainly invalid. Granted that this law would not exist unless God had established it; how does it follow that one can't *know* this law without *knowing* that God has established it? Surely one can be acquainted with a certain traffic law without knowing who established it. What makes this case different?

But it is always best, when possible, to avoid accusing an author of making a logical blunder; and I think the passage quoted can be given another interpretation. The argument would be valid if it was not merely an *important fact about* laws that they are the Will of the sovereign Creator, but if the word "law" *meant* this. But the ordinary word "law" does not mean this, as Dr. Runner surely knows. So I think the clue is to be found in the fact that he capitalizes "Law" and says, "*I mean* by Law . . . ." In short, he is distinguishing between law and Law, though nowhere in his lectures does he tell us that this is what he is doing.[2] And in this passage he is arguing only that the pagan does not know the Law — which is to say, the pagan does not know that laws are the Will of the sovereign Creator. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that immediately after

2. But even on this interpretation I am completely at a loss to explain Dr. Runner's use of "law" and "Law" in this paragraph: "Now, in reality, such functioning is not identified with the law *for* that functioning. There has been a lot of confusion at this point. Physicists will speak of their mathematical formulae as laws. But these formulae, of course, are not the Law for physical functions; they are shorthand symbolical formulation of the regular subjective responses or uniformities the physicist observes in physical situations. We cannot observe the Law directly; we observe it indirectly through observation of the lawful responses of things to the Law-demand. What the Law itself is we know from the Word of God" (p. 127).

the passage cited he attacks mistaken *conceptions* of law, arguing not that the pagan is mistaken about laws, but about the *conception* of law. So I think we must conclude that this passage neither establishes nor intends to establish the view that Aristotle did not know anything.

Though it is quite possible that I have overlooked something, I have discovered only one other argument in these lectures which might be viewed as attempting to show that Aristotle did not know, among other things, the law of illicit conversion. At one point Dr. Runner gives a few examples to show that a person's "totality view" has a definite influence on his interpretation of various philosophic problems; and then he argues that philosophy and the special sciences, including logic, are not independent of each other. Or rather, he quotes a passage from Prof. Dooyeweerd in which this is argued: "It is impossible to establish a line of demarcation between philosophy and science in order to *emancipate the latter from the former* . . . . Scientific thought is constantly confronted with the temporal coherence of meaning among the modal aspects of reality, and cannot escape from following a transcendental Idea of this coherence . . . even the special sciences investigating . . . the arithmetical and the spatial, cannot avoid making philosophical presuppositions in this sense" (p. 126).

Now no one denies that a person's totality-view conditions his views on various philosophical problems. The hard question, though, is whether it also conditions his treatment of scientific problems. Dr. Runner cites no examples to show that it does; and I think some Christians would say that he *could* cite none, since according to them a person's faith conditions only his views on philosophical problems and not his views on scientific problems. They have argued, for instance, that Aristotle's logic is completely correct — logic is logic — even though his ultimate philosophy of logic is mistaken. I regard this question of the role of presuppositions in science as one of the most fundamental in this whole area; and I agree with Drs. Runner and Dooyeweerd that one's philosophical views may condition his scientific views. Unfortunately, at this absolutely crucial juncture Dr. Runner gives neither any examples nor any analyses. But examples can be found — the Scriptures. The Word of God gives us the fundamental interpretation of reality; but it does not furnish us with a knowledge of all facts and laws. Rather, these are presumably to be discovered according to the techniques of the various sciences — by analyzing arguments, by performing experiments, by making observations. Then, since the pagan, too, can attain truth (not Truth), the Christian and the non-Christian can often accept each other's analyses and results and observations; a difference in commitment does not always mean a difference in the facts and laws which we accept. And this, too, I take to be a traditional and widely accepted Protestant view of the relation between the Scriptures and learning — one with which I find myself in full agreement.

I have this concern, however. If the Word of God does not direct our scientific research in the sense that one need only study it in order to do research, in what way then does it direct research? I have always felt, after reading discussions on the relation between Scripture and learning, that this is one of the points on which I remained most in the dark. And on this point, too, Dr. Runner's lectures have let me down. It is comparatively easy to show the relevance of the Scriptures to the big philosophical issues. But we want to know in what sense the Scriptures direct research on *specific* and *limited* topics. For, after all, it is on such topics that the scientist spends most of his time; he does not, nor should he, spend all his time discussing ultimate problems. Even the philosopher, unless he have as metaphysical a temper as Dr. Runner seems to have, will often be concerned with specific questions of analysis. So the Christian logician analyzing arguments, the Christian physicist working in a laboratory, the Christian mathematician developing a proof — exactly how do the Scriptures direct *their* work? I find myself still in the dark here; yet their work must be done.

NOW TO DRAW together what I think Dr. Runner must be saying in these lectures, often with a good deal of rhetorical fervor: The Christian and the non-Christian have made opposing religious commitments. These commitments have ramifications and implications throughout philosophy and the sciences. At some points the difference in commitment will not show through — everyone, for instance, accepts the law of illicit conversion; at other points it will show through. And there is no neat way of separating these into two distinct areas. It is our task, then, always to dig out the implications of our faith, where these exist; and to oppose the manifestations of an opposing faith, where they exist.

One final point: If we are to oppose non-Christian commitments wherever they show themselves in the fields of learning, we will need a great deal of sensitivity and intelligence, plus a rich acquaintance both with God's Word and with the various sciences. But it seems to me that in his attacks on various philosophical views Dr. Runner often does not display these prerequisites. Apart from objections to specific arguments, I feel especially uneasy about two of his techniques. In the first place, in order to show that a certain philosophical view is anti-Christian he often inquires into the origin of the view and then shows that in its original form the view was anti-Christian. But surely this establishes only that the view in its original form was anti-Christian, not that it remained so. For instance,

one of his arguments *versus* the mind-body distinction is that it was originally associated with an anti-Christian contrast between a higher and lower part in man.[3] But this doesn't show that every form of the mind-body distinction is mistaken, since there are many forms in which this contrast plays no part at all.

Secondly, Dr. Runner often seems to assume that when different philosophers use the same word for the concept they are trying to convey, they must also be using the same concept. Of course, he cannot really believe this, since he himself uses the Hegelian terms "thesis," "synthesis," and "antithesis," and would then himself stand condemned of the sin of "synthesis." But sometimes I find it impossible to interpret his *practice* in any other way. For instance, both Runner and Bertrand Russell talk about the unity of the self, and Runner quotes a passage from Russell in which he says that he is unable to discover wherein this unity lies. But anyone who checks will see that Russell and Runner are discussing quite different problems.[4] Similarly he attacks the doctrine of the apriori, a doctrine which he says both the Stoics and Descartes held. But there isn't any such thing as *the* doctrine of the apriori, only a number of different doctrines all bearing vague resemblances and going under the same name; and Dr. Runner's objection to the apriori seems to me not at all relevant to Descartes. Again, when Dr. Runner attacks the concept of Reason, and avers that Reason does not exist, he is attacking something which does not exist. There is no such thing as *the* concept of Reason.

3. The other argument is this: The Bible teaches that man is a unity, and hence the mind-body distinction is mistaken.

4. The reference, though, should not be to page 51 of Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*, as the footnote says, but to page 80.

Does Life Exist on Other Planets?

by Herman H. Broene

THE QUESTION used as the title of this article is an intriguing one and the subject of much discussion by scientists today. Are there intelligent creatures elsewhere in the universe? If so, what are they like? Can we ever establish contact with them? Almost any magazine carrying news of science has touched on some phase of this problem in recent years. It would seem superfluous to publish an article in this journal, were it not for the fact that this whole question has definite implications for our traditional religious views. The discussion of some of these implications is the purpose of this writing.

The Geographical Situation

Most popular articles on the subject begin by recounting our geographical location. We should perhaps review it briefly. Our earth is one of some eight or nine planets revolving around the sun, the whole group forming what we call our solar system. The closest planets to us are Mars and Venus, and on these we can find no certain evidence of life. Scientists are agreed that if any life exists on either planet, it is probably not much more than moss, lichens, or other similar plants. We have never seen any real evidence of intelligent life, on either, in spite of all sorts of stories about flying saucers and men from Mars. The other planets in our solar system are still less likely to be the home of any life as we know it, because of more extreme temperatures or the presence of poisonous gases in the atmosphere. So we conclude that we very probably shall never find intelligent life on other planets within our own solar system.

Before we dismiss the original question entirely, however, remember that our sun is but *a* star. All of the stars you see at night are other suns. Many of them are very much like our own sun, although some are larger, some smaller, some hotter, some colder. Do they have planets, too? And if they do, are these planets the home of intelligent life similar to ours? To the first question we answer, "Probably yes." To the second, "We do not know." Let us take these questions one at a time.

We know of no reason to suspect that our sun is unique among stars. It seems to be just about average in its characteristics. The only distinguishing feature about it, from our point of view, is that we are very close to it. From inference, then, one can argue that if our sun has planets, probably some other stars do, too. At least, it seems more logical to assume the presence of such planets than to assume their absence. There is some astronomical evidence to support the claim, but direct observation of any such planets is very uncertain because of the great distances involved. Our sun is about 93 million miles away, and its light takes eight minutes to reach us, traveling 186,000 miles per second. But the nearest star is so far away that its light takes 4.3 years to reach us. At this dis-

tance one could hardly expect to be able to observe an object as small as a planet.

According to this reasoning, astronomers tell us that there may be some ten billion stars with planets in our galaxy (group of stars) alone, and there may be over one hundred billion galaxies in the universe. These are fantastically large numbers involving fantastically great distances. But on the basis of all known scientific facts, we must conclude that there *may be* countless other worlds. We have no direct evidence for it, but neither have we any good scientific objection to the inferential evidence presented above.

Now for the second question: Are any of these worlds, if they do exist, peopled with intelligent beings? This, it seems to me, is the major question. Non-Christian scientists generally take the position that since life appeared on this planet, it will also appear anywhere where conditions are favorable. A person who believes that life originated spontaneously as the result of chance happenings, can, I think, well expect it to appear in various localities. Some non-Christian scientists take the opposite view, however. They say human life is unique; that you will never find creatures like man on other planets. But this argument, too, is based on blind mechanistic evolution as the result of a long series of chance mutations. The end result is so unusual that it could never happen twice, they say; you would never find man elsewhere.

Both arguments, in my judgment, carry no weight for the Christian. We know that if other forms of life exist on other planets it is because God put them there, just as He put us here. The non-Christian can argue that life should be present as a result of chance happenings — or he can argue that it should be absent for the same reason. But both arguments make chance the cause of life and are therefore spurious. Here is a basic difference of opinion between the Christian and the non-Christian. We know God as the origin of life. He may have placed it on only one planet; He may have placed it on thousands. The decision was His alone.

Seeking the Answer

The question therefore becomes: Did God place life on other planets or not? How can we answer this question? First of all, does the Bible say anything about it? According to Prof. M. J. Heinecken of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, "There is nothing in the Biblical witness to deny the possibility of other creatures of God other than men"[1] Other conservative Biblical scholars have held the same view. As far as I can determine, Scripture is silent on this point. The Bible is God's revelation to man as a human on this planet. It does tell us that God has other intelligent creatures (for example, angels), but says nothing as to whether or not there are also intelligent creatures with physical bodies in some physical place in this universe.

So we ask: if Special Revelation is silent, can we learn from General Revelation, that is, Science? As you can read in many popular articles today, Project Ozma has been set up at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia, to try to determine if intelligent beings in space are seeking to contact us. Radio signals constantly come to us from outer space and can be picked up by our giant radio telescopes. The signals are believed to be due to natural causes, but there is always the possibility that some are not. Perhaps if we listen at the right time and to the right spot in the heavens, we might pick up intelligible signals instead of random static. Last April the astronomers at Project Ozma began a systematic effort to find some such intelligible signals. Perhaps they will someday receive a simple signal of dots and dashes or of prime numbers — anything to indicate an intelligent being is sending it. If they do, and if they can then decipher the code, man shall have made the first contact with rational beings on other planets.

It is because a definite possibility of success exists in this area that the present article is being written. I believe that a number of questions should be faced and freely discussed now. In a sense these are not urgent questions, and certainly nothing about which to become agitated. My only desire is that we as Christians should be prepared in advance. We should not be completely at sea on the religious implications involved in case Project Ozma should ever be successful in establishing communication with extra-terrestrial life.

The Implications

These religious implications can be put as a series of questions which I certainly am not entirely able to answer. First of all, is there anything in our traditional religious concepts or doctrinal positions to preclude the possibility of rational life on other planets? Is there anything in the concept of the image of God that limits it to one form of life, namely, man on this earth? Could we reasonably expect to find someday other creatures also made in God's image, although on a slightly different pattern? These are questions which should be faced.

Secondly, it is interesting to speculate on the type of life we might encounter. Would it be fallen or unfallen? Suppose we someday found a race of unfallen beings, could we communicate successfully with them? Would we understand each other? When man fell into sin, he lost a great measure of his ability to comprehend God and His world. Perhaps sinless creatures would understand us far better than we would understand them. On the

1. *God in the Space Age*, by Martin J. Heinecken (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1959), p. 122. See Chapter 5 of this book for a further discussion of this whole question.

other hand, some of our actions, tainted with sin as they are, might be meaningless to them. Again, would sinful man try to corrupt or exploit them? Would we trust their sheer goodness, or would we continually look for a catch somewhere? Remember that we probably would not at first know they were sinless; this would have to become apparent in course of time.

If we should someday find another race of fallen beings, what should we do? Should we preach the Gospel of Salvation to them? Some scholars say we should. They regard Christ's sacrifice as efficacious for any creature made in the image of God, whether he be human or not. We could therefore be used by God to bring the Gospel to the whole creation in a much wider sense than we have previously thought possible. The opposite view is that Jesus died in human form as part of the human race on this planet. Therefore His death is efficacious for humans only, and not for another race. We would therefore not be able to offer the Gospel of Salvation to them, although we would still tell of the marvels of God's grace to the praise of His name. In the latter view we must, I suppose, trust God to make His own arrangements with other worlds. Some scholars have even suggested that He did: perhaps the whole drama of sin and salvation has been enacted many times. Perhaps Christ had to become incarnate in many worlds. But I find this notion hard to reconcile with Revelation 1:18, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore . . .," or with Hebrews 10:12-14, ". . . one sacrifice for sins forever. . . ." As Prof. Heinecken says on this point, "It has by no means been proven that there are other creatures and other worlds, and it may still just be that all this vast stage is the stage for this one drama of creation, fall, redemption, consummation. What a stage and what a drama!"[2]

Thirdly, I should like to ask what all this means for the idea of the cosmic significance of Christ's redemption? Romans 8:22 says ". . . the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." If there are other inhabited worlds, did they become different when man fell? Did man's sin affect not only this planet but others also? And if so, does Christ's redemption of man here on earth affect them also? This is one possibility. The other one, it seems to me, is that the cosmic significance primarily means that man was put out of touch with the whole cosmos because of his sin, and through Christ is put back in touch again. Therefore, for man, the whole creation is renewed in Christ. There would then be no actual physical change in the rest of creation as such, just in man and his relation to it. This whole question could probably stand some more evaluation in the light of the possibility of other inhabited worlds.

Finally, can these considerations increase our appreciation of the greatness of our God? If there are thousands of other inhabited worlds, He is their Creator and Ruler also. The ancient Hebrews regarded Jehovah as their own God and were constantly falling into the sin of recognizing other gods for other nations. For some two thousand years now, we have recognized Jehovah God as the ruler of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, on this earth. It is just possible that we are now on the verge of realizing that our vision of Him is still far too limited, that His rule extends over countless other intelligent creatures who in their own way also glorify Him.

In summary, there may be intelligent life on other planets. Some day soon we may know and even establish communication with such creatures. In the meantime, it is not too early to face calmly some of the religious implications involved.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

TOWARD A BETTER COMMUNION SERVICE

A RESPONSE TO THE REV. J. K. VAN BAALEN FROM DR. LEWIS B. SMEDES

Rev. John Karel van Baalen's latest statement on the communion formulary served the purpose that I had hoped for. Besides being a clear and kindly expansion of his objections to the formulary revisions, his article reveals a significant difference between us. Our principal disagreement lies in our respective ideas of the function that a communion formulary should serve. Mr. Van Baalen wants a formulary that includes all the doctrine and exhortation relevant to communion. I want a formulary whose function is much more limited. In my view, the formulary has the specific purpose of inviting, in the Lord's name, the Christian people present to receive the grace of our Lord Jesus in the sacrament. In his view, the formulary serves the complete liturgical function of the service up to the actual celebration. In my view, the formulary is but one moment in the liturgical service, the prelude to participation in the sacrament.

The difference in our points of view is admirably illustrated by Mr. Van Baalen's readiness to use the old formulary as a sermon. "The Complete Form for the Lord's Supper," he writes, "is the best conceivable and complete sermon on the sacrament." My response is that if the formulary can be used as a sermon it is obviously not a good formulary. A formulary and a sermon are two distinct things. A sermon is a proclamation of the Word, mediated through a human personality and mind, delivered in the living language of the day to a specific congregation: it must be a new thing each Sunday, so that the Word of God can be brought fresh to every situation. The Reformed tradition is right in insisting on the sermon as the central part of the liturgy. People do wrong only in making it the whole of the liturgy. But the Word must be complemented by the sacrament. The sacrament is the climax to the truth of the word. And a formulary is used, after the

preaching of the Word, to initiate the actual celebration of the sacrament. It is obvious that a formulary cannot serve as a sermon. If we have one that can be used in the sermon's place, it is a bad formulary.

Furthermore, the use of a formulary as a sermon can only provide a poor sermon. Mr. Van Baalen would have done better had he preached a genuine sermon and omitted the formulary. I sympathize with him when he laments that our people "want words, talk." I think that in fact our liturgy has promoted the notion that truth about a thing is of equal importance with the thing itself. In our services of communion, baptism, ordination, etc., the formularies are so long and tedious and didactic that the actual reality to which they point becomes a liturgical anticlimax. This is why we need a brief formulary, indeed, briefer ideally than either of the two revisions. The solution is not to have a longer formulary and no sermon. It is to have a sermon complemented by the sacrament, celebrated after a brief formulary.

Our difference is further illustrated by the question of the list of sins. Mr. Van Baalen does not make a plea for the list found in the old formulary; indeed, he recommends the list suggested by a former liturgical revision committee to the Synod of 1953. He makes two valid observations on this list. (1) The list closely follows the Ten Commandments. (2) The list mentions sins that are commonly committed by Roman Catholics, spiritists, communists, divorcees, and such superstitious people as carry charms and have their palms read.

My response to his first comment is that the Ten Commandments do have a proper place in the communion service. Furthermore, specific sins that fall under the prohibitions of the Decalogue — and what sins do not? — also have a place in the service. But neither of these have a proper place in the formulary. The Ten Commandments are part of the liturgical dialogue we often call the Service of Confession. The dialogue goes as follows: The divine Word of Command — the peoples response of confession and petition for pardon — the divine Word of Forgiveness (Absolution) — the people's response of praise and thanksgiving. This is one act in the entire liturgical drama. As to the specific sins, they belong in the Word of God preached, addressed to specific people at specific times with specific failings.

My response to his second comment is that the formulary is not read to a gathering of Roman Catholics, spiritists, communists, and superstitious folk. It is addressed to a Christian congregation. I would not deny that an occasional papist, communist, spiritist, or superstitious person may be present at the communion service. But the sins that beset the twentieth-century congregation are not pre-eminently those caught in Mr. Van Baalen's net. Our sins are more subtle, more invidious, more sophisticated than can be effectively indicated by such a list. The materialistic goals, the self-righteous conceits, the spiritual niggardliness, the demonic hostilities, the restless passions that captivate our spirits must be preached at prophetically and constantly. But the surest way to emasculate a warning against our sin is to encase it in a list within a formulary. No list will ever be long enough to catch all our particular sins. But to have a list will tempt the worshipper to suppose that the sins that really count are only those formulized for repititious reading. No, I am sure that the formulary is the worst place for a list of sins. It damages the formulary. It fails the sinner.

The change made in the revisions which disturb Mr. Van Baalen most is what he calls "the splitting" of the form. I can see that we are not going to understand each other on this point. He feels that our committee has mutilated the old form. We have rent asunder what tradition has wisely joined together. My position, on the other hand, is that we have created two distinct formularies, each complete in itself. One of them is an exhortation to self-examination. The other is an invitation to communion, a preface to the sacrament. If we need a formal exhortation to self-examination, we need it when there is still time to examine our lives and to make good what is wrong with them. For this reason, the exhortation is read on the Sunday prior to the communion service. Does it make better sense to read it on communion Sunday? Can a person truly examine himself during the few moments allowed him during the reading of the formulary? Can a person reconcile himself with his neighbor during those moments? I would not contend that no searching of the heart is needed during the communion service. I am, however, suggesting that the kind of self-examination called for by the formulary needs considerable time. This is why, in one of our revisions, we have provided for a distinct preparatory exhortation to be used a week before the communion is celebrated.

Mr. Van Baalen argues that this kind of exhortation can be done by the preacher in his preparatory sermon, rendering a formulary superfluous. On that same ground, it would seem, we could also dispense with a communion formulary. Indeed, Mr. Van Baalen does dispense with the communion formulary in effect when he uses it as a sermon substitute.

What Mr. Van Baalen seeks in a formulary is a complete evangelical and doctrinal statement. My position is that a formulary can best perform a more limited function. Specifically, the formulary, I think, should be the devotional preface to the actual giving and reception of the sacrament. The sacrament itself is the climax of a liturgical service — a service in which the proclamation of the Word is the center, of which in turn the sacrament is the climax. The formulary is but a brief prelude to the climax of a complete communion liturgy.

I tried to make this point some five years ago in this journal. I said then that our most serious need was not merely a revised formulary, but a communion liturgy. In the absence of a liturgy, our proposed revision of the formulary is, in my judgment, as good as we can do. But what we need is a liturgy for communion. In making one we must be theologically as well as aesthetically aware of what we are doing. The Word and sacrament must be complements. The sacrament is a climax to the Word. Thus, the liturgy must involve a progressive dialogue in which the Word of God is proclaimed and the people respond; it must be a sustained dramatic encounter in which all the acts proceed toward the single end — the coming of Christ in the sacrament and the final offering by the people of themselves to the Christ who has come to them. The formulary should perform an important, but only minor, part in the liturgical drama.

In conclusion, two disconnected remarks. The first is about the creed. Dr. F. L. Rutgers notwithstanding, a

creed and a prayer are two different things with two different liturgical functions. The only tradition that joins them is the single tradition of our own communion formulary, a tradition that is isolated from the mainstream of liturgical practice, a tradition that has handed down a practice without liturgical sense. The second is about open communion. I agree with Mr. Van Baalen about the essential ecumenicity of the communion service. But I fail to see how the inclusion of an exhortation to self-examination of the sort he wishes can make any difference. The summons to remember Jesus Christ and His passion is the crucial summons, and the response of penitence and faith is the crucial response. This is provided for in the formulary.

Finally I should say that when I refer to Mr. Van Baalen as my "venerable friend," I do so, not in deference to years, but in respect to experience and place of honor among the servants of Jesus Christ.

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BOOK NOTES

Work. An Inquiry into Christian Thought and Practice. A Symposium edited by John M. Todd. Published in Great Britain by Darton, Longmans & Todd; in the USA by Helicon Press, 1960.

These are the papers prepared for the third of a series of symposia held at Downside Abbey, England, by British Roman Catholic laymen and priests.

"The religious man," writes Mr. Todd in the preface, "often has difficulty in understanding the way in which his vocation embraces all his activities; in particular it is often hard for him to see the relevance of his daily work to the inspiring assurance of the Church that he is called to share, here and now, the life of God.... We hope this book may suggest something of the Christian way to heal the split occurring in all our lives — the split which runs down between the revelation of the Christian gospel and the daily round. . . ."

The volume opens with a brief survey by several university professors of the "Historical Roots of our Practice and Ideas" concerning the phenomena associated with "work." Starting with Greece and Rome, they move through early Christianity and into the modern world.

Section II of the book consists of the responses given by Catholics in a variety of occupations to the question: "What value do you as a Christian see in your work?" A factory draughtsman, farm manager, housewife, advertising executive, government research worker, doctor, and parish priest each write "about their work as Christians."

Section III, on the organization of work into its various modern forms — industry, unions, international co-operatives — leads into Section IV entitled "Towards a Theology of Work."

A quotation or two from the latter Section will indicate, but by no means exhaust, its themes. From the paper by Herbert McCabe, entitled "Theology and Work — a Thomist View," the following:

"The first man in creation is a worker, and for this reason the first man of the new creation, Christ, the second Adam, comes to us as a worker. Both appear as manual workers, the one as a farmer, the other as a carpenter, and the reason for this, it seems to me, is that manual work is most typically work. . . .

"At the Fall, the power of Satan was externalized and symbolized by a partial return to chaos, by a disorder in the created world. . . .

"The trouble with secularist humanism is that it is mere anti-satanism. . . . He speaks metaphorically of 'the conquest of disease' for example. The Christian, on the other hand, thinks of medicine not metaphorically as the conquest of disease, but sacramentally as the conquest of the devil. All work is concerned, in one way or another, with imposing a human order on the world, but for the Christian the only human order that can be imposed is the divine human order of Christ. . . ."

At a time when individual human effort seems largely swallowed up and rendered meaningless by the vast impersonalisms of business, industry, labor, and even of the professions, a "theology of work" is of imminent significance. Conservative Protestantism will contribute meaningfully to the development of this "theology" largely to the extent that it frees itself from the blinders of classical economics and extends its interest beyond the devising of separate organizations.

This stimulating volume will serve at least as a valuable introduction to such enterprise.

LETTER

SIRS:

I just wanted to take this occasion to commend you for the articles that appeared in the *Journal* by members of the Hope College English Department in recent issues on Poetry, the Novel, and Drama in the Space Age. I hope you will find it possible to include articles on such subjects in future issues of the *Journal* on a regular basis. I for one lack rapport with these fields, and I certainly welcomed the help the articles afforded.

May the Lord continue to bless your efforts.

Sincerely,

EDSON T. LEWIS, JR.

Monsey, New York

OCT 31 1960

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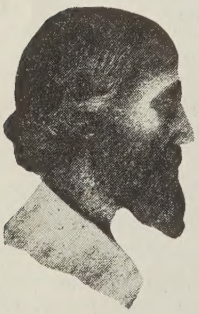

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